Export of spices and cashew

1164. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a slump in exports of spices and cashew;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to increase the exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) During the period April-June, 2004, there is no decline in the export of spices and cashew, as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Steps taken to increase export of spices from India include post-harvest improvement through training and infrastructure development, trade promotion, extending support for upgradation of technology, introduction of high tech spice processing, setting up/ upgradation of laboratories, accreditation of units in GMP/HACCP/ ISO, packaging development, printing of business brochures, business tours abroad, sending business samples abroad, support for organic farming of spices and award of Spice House Certificate, and Indian Spices Logo for popularising good manufacturing practices, good hygienic practices and branded spice products. The Government assists cashew exporters through export promotion schemes like quality upgradation by process improvement, acquisition of flexi pouch vacuum packaging system, setting/improving the facility for cashew kernel in value added form/consumer packs and implementation of ISO/HACCP certification in order to boost cashew exports.

Indo-Thailand trade pact

1165. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Thailand have signed a trade pact;

(b) if so, the features thereof;

(c) whether agro-industries, automotive parts and components, electronics, software would have a significant investment potential in Thailand;

(d) if so, to what extent, India would be able to invest in the above mentioned fields in Thailand; and

(e) whether any agreement has been signed between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (e) India and Thailand have signed a Framework Agreement for Establishing Free Trade Area on 9th October, 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Framework Agreement provides for negotiations for tariff reductions/elimination in order to establish India—Thailand Free Trade Area (FTA) covering trade in goods by 2010. The key elements for the Framework Agreement cover FTA in goods, services and investment, and identified areas of Economic Cooperation. The Framework Agreement also provides for an Early Harvest Scheme (EHS) under which a common list of items has been agreed for elimination of tariffs on a fast track basis. The key elements are the subject of ongoing negotiations and have not been implemented as yet. The proposed establishment of a Free Trade Area between India and Thailand is expected to promote bilateral trade and investment flows. This would depend on the complementarities and comparative advantages of various industries. Invariably, investment decisions are influenced not just by the changes in tariffs but also by other factors such as the cost and availability of raw materials, skilled manpower and infrastructural facilities.

Patent Amendment Bill

1166. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have drafted the Patents Amendment Bill;

(b) whether it is designed to meet Trade related intellectual property obligation of extending product patents to pharma and agro-chemical sectors;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what steps Government are taking, through amending Bill, to simplify processing of the applications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (d) In terms of India's obligation under the agreement on Trade Related Aspects of